

FAQs for 2G Cessation

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A1 Why did the Government agree to cease 2G mobile services?

2G usage has been declining steadily. 2G subscriptions have decreased more than 90% in the past five years, from 2 million subscriptions in 2011 to about 132,000 in December 2016. This is less than 2% of the 8 million mobile subscriptions in Singapore. Hence, it is no longer sustainable for the mobile operators to maintain 2G networks.

The mobile spectrum that is freed up from 2G services will be re-allocated to faster 3G and 4G mobile networks. This will give the vast majority of mobile subscribers better 3G/4G coverage and faster services.

A2 How will the Government use the spectrum freed up from 2G services?

The Info-communications Media and Development Authority (IMDA) will allocate the mobile spectrum used for 2G services to the fourth new mobile network operator, and to existing operators to meet the rising demand for 3G/4G mobile services.

A3 Have other countries ceased 2G mobile services?

South Korea and Japan ceased their 2G networks in 2010 and 2012 respectively. Australia is in the midst of ceasing their 2G networks by late 2017.

B. TRANSITING FROM 2G PHONES

B1 What is a 2G network? How do I know if I am currently using this network?

2G refers to the second generation of mobile networks. Generally, such mobile phones only support voice calls, SMS and very basic Internet access. Do check with your service provider (M1 – 1627, SingTel – 1688, StarHub – 1633) if you are unsure whether you are currently subscribed to 2G services.

B2 How to check if your phone supports 3G/4G?

- ✓ Does your phone have a 3G/4G/LTE logo?
- ✓ Does your phone have a colour screen?
- ✓ Can your phone access the Internet?
- ✓ Does the phone have a touchscreen?
- ✓ Can you send and/or receive images via SMS?

If you have 3 ✓ or more, you may already own a phone suitable for use after April 2017.

B3 Can I retain my current mobile plan if it is a 2G plan?

As part of the migration plan, your service provider will allow you to retain your current mobile subscription plan. Your subscription will continue and the price of your mobile plan will remain the same, until you decide to change or upgrade your subscription plan.

B4 Do I need a new phone?

If you are currently using a 2G-only mobile phone, you will need to purchase a mobile phone which can minimally support 3G technology in order to connect to mobile networks in Singapore with effect from 1 April 2017. Please check with your service provider (M1 – 1627, SingTel – 1688, StarHub – 1633) if you are unsure whether your current mobile phone can support 3G technology.

B5 Will I need a new SIM Card?

You may require a new SIM Card if you are currently on a 2G subscription plan and you have not changed your SIM Card to a 3G-enabled SIM Card. Please contact your service provider (M1 – 1627, SingTel – 1688, StarHub – 1633) for assistance if you are unsure whether your current SIM card is 3G-enabled.

B6 Does this mean that I can use data services once I start using a phone that supports 3G?

You will have access to data services which allow you to surf the Internet or use Internet based mobile apps from your phone. You may, however, incur extra charges on top of your current mobile plan, if your plan does not come bundled with data.

If you do not wish to have access to such data services or such functions, please contact your service provider (M1 – 1627, SingTel – 1688, StarHub – 1633) to disable your access to data services.

If you wish to have access to data services, you may consider changing your mobile plan to one that includes bundled data. Please call your service provider (M1 – 1627, SingTel – 1688, StarHub – 1633) for more details.

B7 What can I do if I do not want to use data services?

If you do not wish to have such functions, please contact your service provider (M1 – 1627, SingTel – 1688, StarHub – 1633) to disable your access to data services.

B8 What can I do if I do want to use data services?

If you intend to access data services, you may wish to consider upgrading to a subscription plan that comes bundled with data, or subscribe to value added service for data service. Do contact your service provider (M1 – 1627, SingTel – 1688, StarHub – 1633) for further assistance or if you are unsure about your current mobile plan. You may also check with your service providers on the options available to limit data usage.

B9 What are the options available to me if I wish to limit my 3G/4G data usage?

You may check with your service providers and subscribe to the data bundled plan that suits your needs or usage pattern. You are also encouraged to monitor your data usage using the tools offered by your service providers. You may wish to check with your service providers for more information on the options available.

B10 Can I still purchase 2G-only mobile phones if I want to?

No. Sale of 2G-only mobile phones for local use has been prohibited from 1 January 2017.

B11 I want to upgrade my mobile phone to a 3G-capable mobile phone. How will I know if the mobile phone I'm buying is NOT a 2G-only phone?

Please check with the seller and confirm that the mobile phone that you are purchasing is a 3G-capable mobile phone.

C. PUBLICITY ON 2G CESSATION

C1 When did the Government announce that 2G services will cease operations?

The cessation was announced one and a half years ago, on 15 June 2015, by then-IDA.

C2 How were users informed of the cessation and the options available to them?

The mobile operators have sent direct messages to their users since the formal announcement one and a half years ago. These include SMS blasts and messages on users' bills. The operators have also run roadshows and promotions encouraging users to switch to 3G/4G subscriptions and handsets.

These communication efforts have intensified in the recent months with media articles and commercials to raise awareness of the cessation.